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# Including Disabled Learners in Work Based Learning

An Equality and Diversity /  
DDA Resource Handbook and  
Good Practice Guide for Work  
Based Learning Providers

April 2005

Of interest to Learning and  
Skills Councils and everyone  
involved in Work Based  
Learning in the South East.

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**1**

**Introduction / How to use the Guide  
Disclosure / Confidentiality  
Providers' Duties**

**2**

**Supporting Learners  
Guidelines on Specific Disabilities**

**3**

**Supporting Learners – General Points  
Health and Safety  
Risk Assessments**

**4**

**Introduction / Local & National Resources  
Useful Guidance documents  
Basic Skills Materials**

**5**

**Key National Organisations**

**6**

**Physical Access  
Technical Support  
Risk Assessment**

**7**

**Access To Work**

**8**

**Local Disability Organisations**

**9**

**10**



## A Good Practice Guide for Work Based Learning Providers

### Including Disabled learners in Work Based Learning

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#### Introduction

##### What this booklet is about, and how to use it

This booklet is written both for managers and staff of work-based learning organisations that might have learners with disabilities or learning difficulties.

##### Definition of disability

The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) has the following definition of disability.

*A physical or mental impairment, which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.*

“Physical impairments” includes sensory impairment, and “mental impairment” includes learning disabilities and recognised mental illnesses. “Substantial” means more than minor, and “long-term” means lasting more than twelve months. As a guide to good practice, if a learner discloses (either at induction or at any time during their course) that they have a disability, they should be treated as if the DDA applies to them.

This guide is not solely for institutions and employers that have specific provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. It is intended for everyone in the field of work-based learning.

This guide will give general principles for working with those who have disabilities or learning difficulties, and then go on to explain specific disabilities and difficulties. Each section that deals with a specific disability will attempt to set out:

- A description of the disability and the effect it may have on the learner
- How to make suitable provision to include the learner in WBL activities and to support them in their studies
- A case study of a particular learner and questions on how best one might support that person.

Finally the guide will set out some general points and guidelines on how to support disabled learners.

This booklet is intended to be a continuing resource rather than a one-off informative publication. We hope that managers and staff will use it as a reference work, as well as reading it through to get a general understanding both of their duties under the DDA and good practice.

**This guide does NOT attempt to elaborate on the legal duties set out in the Disability Discrimination Acts (DDA) 1995 and 2005, or in their companion act, the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 (SENDA).**

**It is strongly recommended that providers engage appropriate professional advice where legal matters are concerned.**

## Including Disabled learners in Work Based Learning

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### Disclosure of a Disability

Not all disabilities are visible. Some sensory impairments (such as deafness) are not immediately noticeable, and learning difficulties or disabilities such as dyslexia often only become apparent during learning activities.

The choice of whether to disclose a disability rests upon the learner. Many choose not to disclose, or may not even be aware that their impairment is defined as a disability under the DDA.

It is however important that all learning providers encourage learners to disclose disabilities. This can be done in several ways, but should always be done sensitively.

One way is to ensure that application forms and induction documents have a section in them that asks whether the learner wishes to disclose a disability, and if they want to communicate **in complete confidence** with someone to talk about support needs.

Another is to talk to a learner in private if it becomes clear at any time that they have a disability or difficulty that they have not previously disclosed.

The learner should at all times be reassured of two key points:

- a) There is no pressure on them to disclose – the decision to disclose is entirely up to them. It should be explained that disclosure will help staff to support them.
- b) All information about their disability will be kept in complete confidence, and disclosed only if the learner gives written permission, and then only to people who need to know about the disability in order to be able to support the learner.

What should at all costs be avoided is presenting the learner with a list of disabilities and conditions and asking them to tick boxes on a form, or asking people to disclose disabilities in anything other than a completely private way (written, 1:1 interviews and so on).

Disclosure is an **ongoing process**. A learner may not feel that their disability needs to be disclosed because they do not feel that it will affect their ability to learn, but later in the course (perhaps on a work placement) they may need adjustments to be made.

**Failure to disclose does NOT remove the duty on the provider to make reasonable adjustments.** If the provider cannot reasonably have known that a disability existed, then lack of disclosure is a defence against not having made suitable provision, but once the disability is disclosed or becomes apparent, reasonable adjustments and support must be put in place from that point on.

**Anticipatory adjustments must always be present**, whether or not a learner is present who actually needs them. Examples are parking bays for disabled people, and physical access to premises.

## Including Disabled learners in Work Based Learning

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### Confidentiality

It cannot be emphasised too strongly that information about a learner's disability is kept confidential. The provider has strict duties under the Data Protection Act to treat this information as "sensitive and personal data" and **only disclose it with the written consent of the learner**. The learner should be made aware that they can insist that all information about their disability be kept totally confidential (i.e. not disclosed to anyone else), but it should also be made clear to the learner that if this is done, the provider may not be able to provide certain adjustments and support.

**Confidentiality is not a reason for not providing support.** If certain adjustments can be put in place without breaching confidentiality, then this **must** be done.



## Including Disabled learners in Work Based Learning

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### **Providers' duties under the DDA**

Work based learning providers, in common with all employers and educational institutions have duties under the Disability Discrimination Act not to discriminate against disabled learners.

These duties are set out in the following leaflets from the Learning and Skills Development Agency (LSDA)

#### **The Disability Discrimination Act**

##### **A Guidance leaflet for managers of work based learning provision**

<http://www.lscda.org.uk/files/lscda/research/dda/pubs/WBLmanagersleaflet.doc>  
and

#### **The Disability Discrimination Act**

##### **A guide for trainers of work-based learning provision**

<http://www.lscda.org.uk/files/lscda/research/dda/pubs/WBLtrainersleaflet.doc>

These duties can be simplified as:

- Not to treat disabled learners less favourably than other learners for reasons related to their disabilities
- To provide 'reasonable adjustments' for disabled learners.

These duties extend beyond providing reasonable adjustments and support within a provider's own organisation, to ensuring support is continued when learners are training with an employer. Although actual provision of such support is the responsibility of the employer, learning providers have a duty to ensure that a suitable and safe environment exists there.

## Including Disabled learners in Work Based Learning

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### Less favourable treatment

There are many ways in which a learner can be treated less favourably than other learners for a reason related to their disability. These can be overt (direct discrimination) – perhaps by having a ban on learners with specific disabilities, or not making premises accessible, or refusing to enrol or include learners by citing spurious health and safety issues. There can also be more subtle ways that learners may experience less favourable treatment or discrimination, and these are almost always due to poor staff attitudes leading to exclusion or marginalizing of the learner.

An example would be a learner, who has an autistic spectrum disorder, whose behaviour tends to appear 'odd' and sometimes he makes inappropriate remarks. He is however not a threat to other learners or staff, and his behaviour does not hamper his ability to do his training. However his tutor is uncomfortable communicating with him, and as a result tends to spend more time with other learners in his tutorial group, during 1:1 sessions. This learner is receiving less favourable treatment for a reason related to his disability, even though the tutor may well not be doing this deliberately.

**Another example would be a learner who has disclosed that she is diabetic, and thus needs extra breaks during the day so she can have a snack and monitor her blood sugar level. This is explained at the outset of the course, and accepted by the tutors and management, but halfway through the course the learner undertakes a work placement. The employer has not been told by the provider that the learner is diabetic and so the supervisor there refuses to let her have these breaks. As a result she withdraws from the course. The learner has received less favourable treatment for a reason related to her disability, even though reasonable adjustments had been put in place beforehand at the provider.**

**Both the provider and the employer are responsible for ensuring proper treatment takes place during work placements.**

## Including Disabled learners in Work Based Learning

### Reasonable Adjustments

These vary quite considerably, including equipment provision, physical adjustments to premises, alternative formats for curriculum materials, and full time 1:1 support for learners including if necessary, physical care needs. Some adjustments may also have a general benefit, e.g. improving access by providing a lift would benefit everybody using the premises.

Examples:

- A learner who is partially sighted may need to have printed documents in a larger font.
- A learner who is dyslexic may need more time to read course materials, and may need them in a slightly different format (e.g. with colours other than black type on a white background)
- A learner with a learning difficulty might need instructions or signage to be presented visually rather than just in a written format, e.g.



or in documents in the Easy Read format (available from the Disability Rights Commission website – an example of Easy Read is at <http://www.drc-gb.org/easyread/index.asp>)

- A deaf learner may need a sign language interpreter or may just need to make sure people speak clearly enough to enable lip-reading.
- A learner who uses a wheelchair may need work surfaces that can be adjusted for height. N.B. this is an example of an adjustment that may benefit others, because adjustable work surfaces can also benefit people who are very tall.

This list is by no means exhaustive. Most adjustments will be easy to put in place and have few financial implications. Many of these will provide benefits to everyone, not just disabled learners. Other adjustments may need a more significant investment in equipment, or staff time, especially when they are specific to a certain disability, or to a specific learner.

## Including Disabled learners in Work Based Learning

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### Anticipatory adjustments

There is a duty under the DDA to make 'anticipatory adjustments'. This means that there is an obligation to make certain preparations in advance. These are usually straightforward, such as ensuring physical access to premises, providing clear signage, providing suitable toilet facilities, training front line staff in how to support people with disabilities, and so on.

When planning acquiring new equipment, modifying premises, or making changes to the curriculum, it is always wise to anticipate any adjustments that may be needed to support disabled learners.

For example, if one is ordering furniture, it is always wise to consider whether to obtain some items that can be adjusted for height and accessibility, e.g. tables, chairs, desks and worktops.

Likewise the facilities at reception should include good signage, an induction loop for deaf and hard of hearing people, and accessibility for people with wheelchairs.

It is always worth having an Access Audit undertaken, ideally by a specialist rather than a general surveyor, to highlight and prioritise areas that need modification. Details of how to arrange an Access Audit, and contact details for Access Auditors, are supplied in the Local and National Resources section.

## Supporting Learners with Disabilities

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### General Principles

Before we look at information on specific disabilities, it is worth setting forth some general principles or “ground rules” on how to support learners with disabilities.

These principles are much the same as the general principles for good training and support for all learners, whether disabled or not.

- Treat people first and foremost as **individuals**. Nobody wishes to be stereotyped or labelled according to his or her disability. Therefore the **person** should always be referred to, rather than obvious characteristics such as “that deaf chap” or “you know, the girl in the wheelchair”.
- Do not automatically assume that a disabled person cannot undertake a particular activity or needs unsolicited help. Many have found excellent ways of accommodating their disability and circumventing problems that it causes with everyday activities.
- Always ask learners what their requirements are, and what they think works best for them. They are after all, the experts on the effects of their own disability and it is important that others listen closely to what they say without making assumptions.
- Look at how the organisation currently supports learners, and compare it to examples of good practice. For specific learners, consider how much the difficulties facing the learner are due to the way in which the organisation arranges the training, or physical access to equipment and premises, rather than due to the difficulties themselves. For example, a disabled learner who uses a wheelchair is prevented from using a workstation not because that person is in a wheelchair but because the workstation is not adjustable.

### When planning learning sessions:

- Use a variety of different styles. For example do not rely entirely on giving information through the written word. If something is written down during a session, it is worth speaking it aloud at the same time. People sometimes best receive information in different ways.
- Allow time to review how a learner is progressing with their learning process – observe their strengths as well as any difficulties.
- Ensure that **all** learners are fully included in any group activities, and be aware that group dynamics can sometimes inadvertently cause exclusion.
- Remember that learner support should not be restricted solely to the classroom or the workplace. Some learners need support outside the learning environment, e.g. while using the canteen or other facilities.
- Disabled learners may need to have different arrangements for examinations or assessments, depending on their disability. Examples are extra time, separate facilities, and assistance (a scribe, an interpreter, or carer).

## Supporting Learners with Disabilities

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### In your training sessions:

- Build on learners' strengths and individual interests and the things they are enthusiastic about.
- If a learner attends a session with a support worker or carer, be aware that that person is there to support that learner, and is not there for general support needs.
- Ensure that you always address the learner, not their carer. E.g. talking to an interpreter and saying "Tell X that ..." is rude in the extreme.
- When you are dealing with disabled learners from an ethnic minority group, do be aware that their ethnicity is at least as important an aspect as of their identity as their disability. By the same token, avoid stereotyping learners according to their ethnicity. Different ethnic groups will also regard disability in different ways.

### When a learner is on a work placement:

- Before the work placement starts ensure that the employer is aware of their responsibilities under the DDA. Also emphasise to the employer that you expect that there should be no discrimination in the work place.
- Consider any difficulties with transport to and from the work placement
- Discuss well in advance, with the learner's consent, any specific difficulties the learner may face and how liaison with other staff at the work placement may be necessary to prepare them for working with the learner.
- Make time to discuss, again well in advance, with the employer what reasonable adjustments may need to be in place to facilitate the learning experience and offer support to the employer in making these adjustments.
- Spend time with the learner in the work place, both prior to the work placement and again in the early stages, to be able to fully assess any areas of potential difficulty, and to enable the learner to voice any concerns they may have.
- Employers must be confident that they can contact the provider in case a particular difficulty arises so that it can be resolved as soon as possible.
- Keep regular contact with the employer to check on progress and to give the employer an opportunity to state any concerns they may have.

## Supporting Learners with Disabilities

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### Terminology

People sometimes worry about how to refer to disabled learners or about disabilities in general. They may have concerns varying from not wishing to offend to not appearing to be too “politically correct” or use jargon.

In general the intent should NEVER be to label people according to any disabilities that they have, or to apply “medical terminology” to define people in that way.

One difficulty is that disabled people themselves are trying to establish what is appropriate terminology, and so there is never a fixed list of terms but rather a general one with the specifics changing over the years.

Terminology is important, because words reflect our attitudes and beliefs. However, some of the terms we tend to use may not reflect how some disabled people see themselves. Using the right words matters.

This is not about ‘political correctness’ but using wording and language that disabled people and disabled people’s organisations working to promote the social model of disability find acceptable.

## Supporting Learners with Disabilities

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### Some negative terminology to be avoided includes the following examples

- **Afflicted with** This conveys a tragic or negative view about disability
- **Suffering from** This confuses disability with illness and also implies that a disability may be a personal burden. Increasingly, disabled people view their disability as a positive rather than negative experience
- **The blind** Lumping everyone together in this way is felt by many to take away their individuality. The most appropriate term to use here is 'people with visual impairments', or 'blind people'
- **Victim of** This again conveys that disability is a tragedy
- **Cripple** or **crippled by** Use the term 'the person has...'
- **Wheelchair bound** People are wheelchair users or someone who uses a wheelchair. A wheelchair offers the freedom to move around and is a valuable tool
- **Deaf and dumb** This phrase is demeaning and inaccurate. Many deaf people use sign language to communicate and dumb implies that someone is stupid. Use 'a person with a hearing impairment', or 'a deaf person', or 'sign language user'
- **The disabled** There is no such thing as the disabled. Use the term 'disabled people'
- **People with disabilities** The term 'disabled people' is the preferred term within the social model of disability. 'People with disabilities' suggests that the disability 'belongs' to the disabled person, rather than 'disabled person' which accurately infers that society disables the individual, thus adopting the social model of disability
- **Handicapped** This term is outdated, and can be associated with images of begging and disabled people being cap in hand
- **Invalid** The term literally means not valid
- **Able bodied** The preferred term is 'non-disabled'. 'Able -bodied' suggests that all disabilities are physical and ignores unseen disabilities, and that disabled people are not able

Some phrases are perfectly acceptable. People who use wheelchairs do 'go for a walk'. It is perfectly acceptable to say to a person with a visual impairment 'I will see you later'. Deaf people are unlikely to take offence at 'Did you hear about...'. Common everyday phrases of this kind are unlikely to cause offence.



## Supporting Learners with Disabilities

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### Positive terminology includes the following examples

- Learners with a disability, or disabled learner (preferably the latter)
- Learners with Learning Disabilities  
(N.B. the term Learning Difficulties is often seen as more general, e.g. including dyslexia, and some people prefer the more precise term).
- Learners with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities  
(this is a broad term that covers learners with a wide range of disabilities and complex conditions, including Learning Disabilities)
- Wheelchair User
- Blind, Partially Sighted, or Visually Impaired learners
- Deaf, Partially Hearing, or Hearing Impaired learners
- A person with mental health difficulties.
- A person living with ...  
where ... is the name of the condition.

### General Guidance on Supporting Learners with particular disabilities

Look at particular disabilities and how the disability might affect learning and then going on to look at certain approaches or adjustments that might support the learner.

This guidance is not meant to act as a tool which allows staff to diagnose particular disabilities, for example to suggest how to spot someone who might have an autistic spectrum disorder, but rather to point out the difficulties which some learners could have and to suggest strategies for supporting them.

It is also important to bear in mind that two learners might have the same disability but might have different needs. Do not make automatic assumptions about what a particular person might need. **Always ask the individual first.**

Note that some terms referring to disabilities tend to be clinical or to have too much of a 'medical flavour' to them and some disabled people may dislike being referred to in this way.

## Supporting Learners with Disabilities

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Putting learners and staff at **EASE** with one another

Do not look at the disability as the cause of the problem. Key causes are:

- **Environment**  
Is the physical environment challenging for people with disabilities?  
E.g. restricted space affects people with mobility problems, a visually (and physically!) cluttered environment affects people with sight problems.  
If the learning environment is difficult for people without disabilities, it will create significant difficulties for disabled learners.
- **Attitudes**  
Do people overlook disabled learners or feel they are being 'difficult'?  
Often negative attitudes to disability are simply due to uncertainty (and even fear) over what to do. Proper training can improve attitudes by helping to dispel uncertainty and awkwardness.
- **Support**  
Disabled people do not always need a great deal of support, but often just knowing that they can turn to staff for help with difficulties makes a significant difference. Large establishments can have specialist support and learning centres, but even having a few staff with specialist knowledge and a willingness to help makes a difference.  
An example is a small training company who has a deaf employee as well as a few deaf learners. Several staff can fingerspell and use basic sign language. The working and learning environment has benefited and staff have acquired useful skills.
- **Expectations**  
Sometimes people have inaccurate expectations of what disabled people can achieve. This results in disabled people receiving an inappropriate learning experience; the course may either be insufficiently challenging or conversely may overtask the learner. In both cases, the learner does not achieve their potential. A proper understanding of what a particular disability entails can help staff ensure a disabled learner not only achieves, but also enjoys doing so.

## Supporting Learners – Guidelines on Specific Disabilities

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### People who are blind or partially sighted

Some people will be born blind or with partial sight but a far larger number will acquire a visual impairment later in life. The term 'blind and partially sighted' covers a whole range of impairments from people who are only slightly affected to the very few people who cannot distinguish dark from light.

The needs of people who are blind or partially sighted will vary according to the degree of their sight problem. Many of them will require print that is larger than usual and text that is clearly laid out. However it is important to remember that a few people have what is called "tunnel vision" which means that they can only see a small range of print at a time and so can manage better if print is kept small. The colour of the paper will also affect some people's ability to see text.

Some blind people may require information in other formats, in particular on audio tape or via some kind of text to audio software that works in conjunction with a personal computer.

Many people who are blind or partially sighted have developed a very sophisticated sense of touch. For example you might assume that it will be impossible for them to distinguish between two very similar objects, but they will be able to do this by touch.

It is often assumed that most people who are blind will use Braille. In fact only about 3% of those who are registered blind and partially sighted actually use Braille and these are usually people who have been blind since birth or early childhood.

## **Some ways of working with people who are blind or partially sighted**

### **When preparing your work:**

- Ask people what adaptations help them most. Different people can have very different needs.
- Some learners might need additional help to get used to the layout of the centre and workroom. You might need to adapt the arrangement of furniture etc.
- In practical areas of work discuss with the learner the best way for them to locate pieces of equipment. It is important that they know that certain items are always stored in the same place.
- You might want to bring in someone from a local organisation such as the Royal National Institute of the Blind (RNIB) (see accompanying resources materials) who could advise on particular adaptations - both computer adaptations and other low-tech support such as magnifying glasses.
- Ask people how they manage things at home. Often very simple adaptations, such as a piece of Elastoplast on a tin to distinguish it from other containers can make a big difference.
- Ensure that lighting is good but without glare and that people with a sight impairment can choose where they sit so the light is best for them.
- Produce written materials in an uncluttered layout with a clear typeface (a sans-serif font like Arial is usually good) in point 14 size. This is good practice for all learners although some might need a larger print. Black print on white or yellow is usually effective although some learners may have individual preferences.
- If a learner needs key texts in Braille, large print or on tape discuss this with your specialist worker for disabled students. Some people might also benefit from a CCTV (close circuit television) that allows information or objects to be seen in magnification. These can be used for practical sessions as well as for written information.
- If you are using computers ensure that they are accessible to blind or partially sighted learners. Some learners may need a specially adapted keyboard with larger letters. Others may need to use speech software. Sometimes very simple, low-tech adaptations can help - for example one partially sighted man used an old cornflakes box to act as a protection from too much glare on his keyboard.

**During sessions remember that:**

- If learners have real problems with print or with recording information allow them to hear material on a tape or to tape your lesson.
- Use blue or black pens rather than red, orange or green on a whiteboard and remember that the glare of a whiteboard can be difficult for some learners.  
Always read out what you have written on a board or put on an overhead or PowerPoint presentation.
- If you are using visual aids, e.g. a video, make sure the content is clearly explained.
- Group discussion can cause difficulties for blind people. Encourage other people who are present to identify themselves by name before speaking.

**When a learner is on a work placement or in the work place:**

- Go around the work place in advance with the learner so you can identify any situations, such as in the lay out of the rooms, which might cause difficulties.
- Discuss any adaptations you and the learner have found useful with the employer/employees and talk about any adaptations that might need to be made in the work place.
- If a learner requires any additional hardware or software discuss with the employer how this might best be provided and serviced.

**In general:**

Don't feel embarrassed at using phrases with a visual connotation (for example, "See you"). Phrases such as this have a meaning beyond their literal interpretation and will be used by many blind people.

If a learner brings a guide dog make sure the learner has the opportunity to say how the dog should be treated in class, e.g. not being distracted or fed tit bits etc. Do not assume that blind people will be unable to access certain areas of work. Many blind people have been successful in many areas of training and work. Talk to your local organisations for blind people (see attached resource sheet) about ways this has happened.

**Example**

Tanya is partially sighted. She is following a training programme in Hospitality (catering). She can distinguish between most objects but has difficulties when they are very small in which instances she tends to rely on touch rather than sight. She can read print but only if it is enlarged to font size 18. She has had this condition since birth and so has developed many techniques for coping with it. At home she likes to help with preparing food which is one of the reasons she has chosen to do this training programme.

- What are some of the things you will need to find out from Tanya?
- What are some of the adaptations you might need to make to the practical parts of her programme?
- Are there adaptations you will need to make to the theoretical parts of her course?
- What preparation will you need to do with Tanya and with the staff in the workplace where she is based?
- Are there other people or organisations you might want to get advice from?

## Supporting Learners – Guidelines on Specific Disabilities

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### People who are deaf or partially hearing

Some people may have been born deaf while others may become deaf either gradually or suddenly. The term deaf covers a spectrum of hearing difficulties. Most deaf people have some residual hearing. For a large proportion of the population, hearing tends to become harder as people get older.

People who become deaf before they learn to speak may have difficulty in speaking clearly. Language acquisition can be much harder for people who have always been deaf, in particular an understanding of abstract concepts or of word play such as metaphors or puns.

People who have been born profoundly deaf may well have learnt to use sign language. British Sign Language (BSL) is a language in its own right and has its own grammar, syntax and vocabulary. Learners who use sign language will need to be taught both grammar and the vocabulary that is unfamiliar to them.

If you do not use sign language deaf learners will need to have their own sign language interpreter (who will interpret information presented by staff or other learners into Sign Language) or a communicator (who will also give support in translating spoken or written information into syntax which will be more easily understood by a deaf person). They may also require a note-taker. Your organisation will need to ensure it knows how to book the services of a trained interpreter or communicator.

People who are partially deaf may rely on lip-reading. Lip-reading is not a straightforward activity as it is very difficult or impossible to read some sounds or grammatical structures.

Some particularly difficult sounds to read are r, s, z, g, ng, t, d, n, l.

Word endings can also be difficult for example differentiating between walking, walks and walked.

People who are partially deaf, in particular older learners, may never have had their hearing loss fully recognised at school. It might have been assumed that they were being inattentive or had a learning difficulty when in fact the problem was that they were not able to hear what the teacher was saying.

### **Technology can enhance deaf people's access to language. This can include:**

- Email and text messaging on mobile phones or a Minicom, which is a text telephone.
- Hearing aids. These work by amplifying sounds, which means that all sounds are amplified so that background noise can be a real problem.
- Radio hearing aids which require the teacher to wear a transmitter and microphone.
- Loops which can either be a permanent fixture of a room or be a portable loop which can be set up in any suitable room and worn around the neck.

## Some ways of working with people who are deaf or partially hearing

### In preparation:

- If you or the employer(s) providing the work placement do not already have a loop system in place, look into the possibility of getting one. Also remember that loop systems need regular testing.
- Even if you do not currently have any deaf learners you will need to be aware of how you could get hold on an interpreter when you need one (see list of local resources).
- You might wish to ask a local organisation for deaf people to do an introductory deaf awareness course for your staff and also for relevant employers (see list of local resources).

### As a general rule:

- Face a deaf or partially hearing person at all times when speaking to them and do not speak to the group when your back is turned. Also ensure you have the attention of the learner before speaking
- Make sure that everyone's face is well lit and avoid standing in front of a window or light which puts your face in the shadow
- Speak clearly and at a normal speed but do not shout. Use short clear statements and vocabulary. Repeat if necessary using the same words but, if something does not seem to have been understood, find a different way of saying it. Be clear when you are going to change a subject
- Keep background noise to a minimum. If possible use a carpeted room as this absorbs sound. Look at the particular needs a deaf person might have in certain workshop situations
- Remember that loud noises can be very distressing for someone using a hearing aid as the hearing aid amplifies all sounds
- Be aware of how much background information we all pick up through hearing and remember that deaf people will not have access to this way of receiving information
- It can be useful to give copies of lecture notes or board work to learners before the class so they can follow these without having to copy anything down
- Do not assume that certain subject areas will be impossible for deaf people.

Remember Evelyn Glennie, a world famous percussionist who has been profoundly deaf since she was a young child and 'hears' music through feeling vibrations



**During sessions:**

- In group work establish clear ground rules to ensure that all learners are included, for example, make sure only one person speaks at a time and get learners to indicate when they are speaking
- Use visual information such as pictures, labels, diagrams, key words written up and objects
- When using overheads or PowerPoint presentations make sure the information is clear and key points are prioritised
- Write down words or statements whenever possible and check that these have been understood
- If you are working with an interpreter in the room give time for them to interpret and ensure that you always direct your comments to the deaf person and not the interpreter
- Interpreting and lip-reading are both very tiring. Make sure you allow sufficient breaks
- If you are working with someone who uses BSL check out how comprehensible your handouts and assessment questions are to someone who is used to BSL grammar and syntax

**When a learner is on work placement or in the work place:**

- Make sure that staff are aware of how best to speak to the particular learner who has a hearing impairment, e.g. facing the person and speaking clearly without shouting
- Discuss any particular needs the learner might have, for example needing a loop system, and how this might be accommodated

**Example**

Abbas applies to do a training programme in business administration. He tells you that he has a hearing impairment. This occurred as a result of an illness so Abbas learnt how to speak when he was a child and his speech is perfectly clear. He uses a hearing aid and also prefers it when there is a loop system in place. With these adaptations he can hear reasonably well although he does need people to speak clearly and face him when speaking to him. He finds it hard to hear when he is in a noisy environment.

- What are some of the adaptations you might need to ensure are in place when Abbas joins his programme?
- What will you need to bear in mind when working with Abbas?
- Is there any staff training you might need to carry out with other staff who are working with him in his workplace?



## Supporting Learners – Guidelines on Specific Disabilities

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### People with a physical disability

When people think of physical disabilities they often automatically think of people in wheelchairs. In fact only a very small proportion of those with a physical disability are actually wheelchair users. Physical disabilities can be temporary or permanent; they can be stable or changing, they can affect one particular part of the body or the whole body, they can be pain free or they can cause an individual considerable pain.

The effects of physical disabilities will vary according to the kind of disability a person has.

Some people might have a condition where sitting still for long periods is impossible. Others might have a difficulty with hand use which makes handwriting particularly hard.

Some people who have a physical disability caused by a neurological condition may also have difficulties in the way they perceive things, for example they can find it hard to locate the correct place on a page or to move from left to right when reading or writing. They might also have difficulty recognising faces or finding their way around a building. Their impairment might cause them to have difficulties with short-term memory, with understanding the information they have received and with speech (see section on speech difficulties below).

### Some ways of working with people with a physical disability

#### In preparation:

Make sure you always discuss with an individual what is difficult for them and what helps them.

Certain simple adjustments might make a lot of difference, for example, seating at a different height; some kind of an armrest, or thick books under a computer to raise its height. Some people may only be able to sit comfortably for a certain length of time and need to stand up and move a little at regular intervals

- You may need to alter the layout of a work room, for example to allow space for a learner to manoeuvre a wheelchair
- You may need to carry out a risk assessment (see final section) to ensure that you have safeguards in place to ensure the safety of a particular learner in a particular situation
- Remember the learner will need to be able to go to other parts of the organisation and ensure they have support, for example, in using a specialist parking space, accessing coffee shop etc.
- You will need to be thinking in advance about the particular needs the learner may have when at work and ensure that you are aware of the physical accessibility of work experience placements which you use

**During sessions:**

- If a learner has difficulties with hand writing, explore possible solutions with them. Certain simple adaptations, such as a grip around a pen, can make a significant difference. Also look at alternatives to writing by hand and the possibility of using a computer maybe with a specially adapted keyboard or speech activated software
- If a person has perceptual difficulties explore with them techniques to compensate for these. These might include providing clear visual guidelines such as a bold line drawn on the left hand margin; a frame or ruler to help identify the line of text; small symbols to indicate left and right
- In practical sessions explore the possibility of making simple adaptations. For example, hand rests or frames can sometimes help individuals to carry out manual tasks; left handed or sprung scissors can make a difference to the level of independence with some practical activities; a learner who uses only one hand can be helped by non-slip fabric under a note pad
- If a learner has difficulty in remembering, ensure you provide instructions in small steps and work with the learner on developing individual techniques which will help them to remember things

**When a learner is on work placement or in the work place:**

- Spend time in advance going around the work place with the learner to see if there are any aspects of the lay out which may need changing. Make sure this includes the non-work areas such as canteen etc.
- Discuss with the employer any particular health and safety issues which may need to be looked into
- Share with the employer/employees any particular adaptations which you and the learner have found beneficial and how these might be arranged within the workplace

**Finally:**

- Do not automatically assume that a physical disability will bar a learner from being able to perform certain activities. Always ask the individual first

**Example**

Jack applies to do a motor vehicle course. Jack has a physical disability which results in him having some weakness in his left side. His walking is rather uneven and he does occasionally lose his balance. Also he does not have much strength in his left hand.

However, he has compensated for this very well and is adept at using his right hand for any movements which require strength. He is passionate about cars and bikes and is determined that this is the one course he wants to do.

Can you envisage any difficulties which Jack might have with the course?

- How might you compensate for these?
- Are there any particular health and safety issues which you might need to look into?
- How might you go about choosing an appropriate work placement for Jack?
- What support might you need to give to staff who will be working with him?



## Supporting Learners – Guidelines on Specific Disabilities

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### People with learning difficulties

There is no exact dividing line between people with a learning difficulty and those without. Everyone learns in different ways and at different rates.

Some people will have difficulty with learning because, for a variety of reasons, they have missed out on certain key elements of learning. Some will have specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia (see below). Others may have a cognitive learning difficulty and it is these learners that this section is about. People with learning difficulties often have uneven learning profiles - that is they may find certain areas of learning very hard but be very good at other things. They may find the practical aspects of a training programme far easier than the more theoretical parts although this is not automatically the case.

Sometimes staff feel that people with a learning difficulty should only be taught in discrete provision for people with learning difficulties. A statement like this is unlikely either to comply with the DDA or to result in best practice. There may be times when individual people wish to experience the security and specialist teaching available in provision specially designed for people with learning difficulties.

However, individual people with learning difficulties themselves often say that they want to move away from a purely segregated environment and take part in the full range of opportunities.

People with learning difficulties are considerably under-represented in the work force. However, examples have shown that often they can succeed very well in work. Often those who are most effective in work have gained employment through supported employment projects. Although some people with learning difficulties can and do obtain NVQ Level 2 it is important to remember that there are other routes into work and that for some people practical support in the workplace itself is by far the most appropriate kind of support.

### Some ways of working with people with a learning difficulty

#### In preparation:

- Find out what the person is interested in and work from this. Do not underestimate people with learning difficulties. Many people with learning difficulties can achieve real success when staff are able to discover what they really want to learn
- Talk to individuals and groups about their past learning experiences, both what has worked and what has failed. There is no point in repeating past failures
- Make sure your approach is age appropriate. All adults need to feel that they are not being treated like children and that they are not endlessly repeating things they have done at school
- Make learning as practical as possible.
- Use a range of materials (visual and spoken as well as written)

- Think of ways in which you can support someone with a learning difficulty carrying out practical tasks - for example, by having a series of photographs, rather than written instructions, placed in appropriate situations
- If learners have difficulties with concentrating, plan sessions so that there are a variety of short activities
- If learners have difficulties with sequencing, arrange tasks so that it is clear for them to remember what order things need to happen in

**During sessions:**

- Always explain things clearly and check that they have been understood
- When people have difficulties with remembering things work with them on creating strategies which they feel might help them to remember
- Encourage all learners in the group to ask for help so that this is seen as an important part of learning and not a sign of failure
- Help learners to record progress and successes, maybe by using pictures rather than words
- Some people with a learning difficulty might require the assistance of a 1:1 support worker. Ensure that you always speak directly to the learner and not via the support worker. However, there might also be ways, with the individual learner's involvement, that the support worker can provide important information on the best ways of working with a particular individual. They can also help to ensure that strategies learnt in a training session are reinforced in other areas of a person's life



**When a learner is on work placement or in the work place:**

- When organising a work placement for someone with a learning difficulty ensure that you have time to liaise closely with the employer to explain thoroughly the kind of support they might need to give
- Share with the employer/employee any specific approaches which have worked when you work with the learner and see if they can be continued in the work place
- When a learner is on work placement make sure that the employer can contact you if necessary. Often a short, explanatory telephone call can sort out what otherwise might become a big problem

**Example:**

Samantha is on a horticulture programme. She has a learning difficulty and attended a special school. When she is told what to do she can perform the required tasks, but if a member of staff is not with her she tends to stop working. She has great difficulty with the written parts of the course. Although she will happily copy from a page of text she finds it very difficult to read or write on her own.

Samantha is very placid and no trouble, but staff are concerned that she seems to be making very little progress. They are not sure that she really enjoys gardening although the staff who referred her had assured them that she loved it. She also rarely talks with any of the other learners.

What action do you feel you need to take?

- How might you find out whether Samantha really does want to do horticulture?
- How might you try to address her social isolation?
- If you feel that the course is the right one for her what might you do to try and address her needs both in the practical and the theoretical parts of the course?



## Supporting Learners – Guidelines on Specific Disabilities

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### People with dyslexia

It is thought that about 10% of the population may have some degree of dyslexia and 4% have difficulties which are severe enough for them to require some specialist support.

Dyslexia is not related to intelligence and learners with dyslexia can present across the full range of abilities. People with dyslexia have difficulties with processing written language - that is to say that they find it difficult to make the link between spoken words and their written form.

Consequently dyslexic people have significant difficulty with reading and writing. Sometimes this is caused by 'auditory processing' difficulties - that is to say people have difficulty in learning the sounds which letters make although they may be very good at remembering the way words look.

Sometimes it is caused by 'visual processing' difficulties - that is to say they have difficulty in recognising words, even very common words, when they see them in written form.

Some dyslexic people have 'motor integration problems' - that is to say they may have difficulty forming words on the page when writing and following a line of print.

Many dyslexic people have a combination of all these difficulties.

Although the primary difficulty that dyslexic people have is related to their difficulty with the written word, dyslexia can also cause difficulties in other areas of a person's life. Dyslexic people may have difficulty in finding their way around, in following instructions, in sequencing and in remembering. All of these can make certain aspects of the working environment hard for them.

There is often a mismatch between what dyslexic people can do and what they cannot. For example, they might be very good at performing certain skills yet still have enormous difficulty with simple reading and writing. Dyslexic people are often 'lateral' thinkers; that is they may approach a problem in a different way than a step-by-step, linear approach.

It is not up to a tutor to attempt to diagnose dyslexia. However, you do need to be aware of specific difficulties a learner may be having and seek advice from specialist staff if you feel a particular learner might benefit from an assessment.

## Some ways of working with people who are dyslexic

### In planning:

- Talk to learners about what they find difficult and what methods have worked or have failed in the past. Do not repeat strategies that have already failed
- Talk with individual learners about practical strategies which might help them in practical sessions or in the workplace. For example they may need clearly written (or visual) instruction pinned up above a particular machine they have to use. They might wish to have a colour coding to help them deal with things they find particularly difficult such as filing etc.
- Remember that dyslexic people often find white paper difficult to read from and write on. Help them to try out whether another colour might be better, for example light grey or cream. They might also find coloured overlays helpful
- Recognise the importance of technology. Using a computer allows an individual to produce a piece of work which looks good and to try out spellings knowing he can always delete if he gets it wrong. Some dyslexic people may always have great difficulty with spelling and should be encouraged to learn to use technical aids such as spell checks
- Recognise that learning may need to be broken down into small, achievable units and allow time for repetition and reinforcement
- Some learners may benefit from additional one to one specialist support. Talk to your senior manager about how to obtain this
- Endeavour to have a learning environment that causes as little distraction as possible – a visually cluttered or noisy environment is difficult for someone with dyslexia.

### During sessions:

- Help learners to understand their own ways of learning and encourage them to create their own strategies, for example for remembering sequences
- Use teaching strategies which match the individual's learning style - for example if a learner thinks very visually use highlight or bold typeface for certain words, or colour coding for storage etc.
- Encourage learners to make visual representations such as mind maps (where information is set out in a visual format often using different colours) so that the learner can see it all at once rather than having to follow words and sentence structures that can be difficult to understand.

**When a learner is on work placement or in the work place:**

- Remember that dyslexia is a hidden disability. Talk with the learner about what information they are happy to share with an employer prior to going on work experience
- Look closely at the tasks the learner will be doing and work with them on what adaptations might help them
- With the learner's consent discuss adaptations you have made with the employer/employees and see how they might be extended to work place situations

**Finally:**

Do not make assumptions about peoples' intelligence because they are dyslexic. Many dyslexic learners can be extremely successful when their particular difficulties are understood and they receive appropriate support

**Example:**

Tom is on a retail course. He is very articulate and keen to get a job in retail. He is currently carrying out his training in an office. However, he is having a lot of difficulty with many aspects of the work. His spelling is not at all good, his handwriting is very difficult to read, and he has problems organising his material and following instructions. You suspect he might be dyslexic but when you suggest this Tom reacts very strongly saying there's 'nothing wrong with him'. You are worried both about his progress on the course and, especially, about how the staff in his workplace are becoming impatient with the difficulties he is having.

**What are some of the ways in which you might support Tom in different aspects of the course?**

- How might you persuade him of the value of having a dyslexia assessment?
- Who might you turn to for help?
- How might you work to support other staff in the office?



## Supporting Learners – Guidelines on Specific Disabilities

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### People with mental health difficulties

There is no clear dividing line between people who can be described as having a mental health difficulty and those who do not. Most of us will, at some points in our lives, experience times when we are particularly upset or anxious. However, there are times when these feelings can become more acute and affect our ability to carry on with day-to-day life. Sometimes this is triggered by a particular event although some people can develop mental ill health for no obvious, external reason. Anybody can experience severe mental health difficulties at any time. You may well have a learner in your class who has achieved high qualifications and held down a professional job and may be returning to learning to regain skills and build up confidence. Alternatively you may have a learner with mental health difficulties who also experiences learning difficulties.

While some mental health difficulties can cause people to behave erratically the most common symptoms are depression, stress and anxiety. People who experience these feelings at a severe level may have fewer coping strategies than other people and can think there is no way of escaping from the state they are in. Learners may find it difficult to engage in any new activities either because they are afraid they will not be able to cope or because they feel there is no point. They may also be very anxious and need more reassurance than other people. Many people with mental health difficulties internalise their difficulties and see their feelings as being 'their fault' which can further knock their confidence and make it even harder for them to access learning.

Mental health difficulties tend not to be static. Individuals might have very markedly good and bad days, or a period when they feel depressed and unable to do anything followed by a period when they feel very active. This can make it difficult for other people to relate to them and for them to engage in group activities. Sometimes they can be very reluctant to interact in any ways, while at other times they may be very keen to talk and tend to dominate the conversation.

There is a lot of stigma about mental health difficulties. People can feel more comfortable if they think there is a 'normal' type of behaviour and feel easily threatened when other people behave in ways which are markedly different from this norm. Because of this many people with mental health difficulties feel ashamed of their condition and this may result in them lacking confidence and feeling anxious or vulnerable.

People who have been diagnosed as having mental health difficulties might be on some kind of medication. Although this can help them with some of the more acute symptoms, the medication itself can often have side effects. It can make concentration and memory very difficult and can also make people feel very tired or have other side effects such as feeling very thirsty or becoming shaky. It can also dictate when a person is able to learn or not. All of these things can affect a person's learning.

## **Some ways of working with people who have mental health difficulties**

### **In planning:**

- Recognise that some learners may need considerable time to settle into a new situation and feel comfortable enough to begin to address their learning. Recognise too that 'ice-breakers' may be threatening for some learners
- Examine how you might be able to be more flexible. A learner may wish to start with only a small number of hours each week and then build this up gradually, so opportunities need to be in place to allow this to happen
- Recognise that some people with mental health difficulties might have days when they are just not able to come to a session and try to find ways to compensate for these absences
- Recognise that it can help for the learner to have permission to leave the room whenever they need to take a few moments break because of anxiety. Having to ask permission on each occasion could, itself, be a trigger to anxiety.
- Remember that anxiety can mask true ability therefore a learner's potential may not be apparent until several weeks into a programme when they have relaxed
- Plan flexible learning situations which include a variety of activities
- Understand that some individuals might have real anxiety about trying new activities and include activities in which people can experience immediate success
- Encourage a supportive environment which is not too judgemental. Give reassurance and honest feedback. Sometimes not saying anything about a perfectly acceptable piece of work can be construed as disapproval

### **During sessions:**

- If someone has particular difficulties with remembering, discuss different memory strategies with them and see what might work best for them
- In group discussions accept that an individual might have times when they feel unable to participate and allow them to withdraw
- In discussions establish clear ground rules, for example one person speaking at a time. Also recognise that some individuals might feel threatened by some discussions and respect their wish for privacy



**When a learner is on work placement or in the work place:**

Talk with the learner to find out what information about their condition they are happy to share with an employer. There is still much stigma about mental health difficulties and learners may be unwilling to disclose their difficulties. Explain to them that it is far easier to put in place adjustments if people have some awareness of their difficulties. However, respect confidentiality too - it may well be that an employer needs to know that there are medical reasons for someone having difficulties with attendance, but this does not mean they need to know every detail about a person's condition

**In general:**

- Recognise the boundaries of your own role as tutor and be clear when there is a need to refer to a senior manager or a disability specialist
- Occasionally people with mental health difficulties can behave erratically in ways which can upset other learners. This can be difficult for tutors as they do of course also have duties towards their other learners. In such situations you will need to seek out specialist advice, but try not to make snap decisions. It might be that someone else who works with the individual in another setting can give advice on strategies which might help. Organisations need to work out their own strategies for dealing with instances of erratic behaviour (which may of course just as well occur with other learners who do not have mental health difficulties)
- Remember that mental health difficulties are not static and than many people can and do move on from their illness. The fact that someone has a mental health difficulty is certainly not an indicator that their condition automatically debars them from participating in normal learning activities.

**Example:**

Judith is on an E2E programme. She is currently on a placement in a residential home for adults with learning difficulties. At the beginning of the course she appeared very tense and nervous and often seemed to miss days. This is difficult for the staff who work in the home. When she does attend staff say that she works hard and is very good at relating to the clients. However, they are concerned that she appears very insecure and is nervous to use her own initiative always seeking approval from a member of staff before moving onto a new part of the job. Usually she is very quiet. However, the other day she disturbed both you and other people in the room by having a sudden outburst when she said that you never commented positively on her work and she left the room in tears. Staff in the home are worried that this sort of behaviour can be unsettling for the clients with learning difficulties.

- What might you do immediately?
- What new ways of working might you try to instigate with Judith?
- How might you try and support other staff in the home who work with Judith?
- Would you feel that you needed to get advice from someone outside your organisation?



## People with autistic spectrum disorders

People with Autistic Spectrum Disorders have difficulty with communicating and can have particular difficulties with social relationships and making friends. The Autistic Spectrum includes people with Asperger's Syndrome. People may be at varying points on the spectrum with some people experiencing greater difficulties than others. People with Autistic Spectrum Disorders display the complete range of abilities from those with severe learning difficulties to those with average or above average intelligence.

The nature of their difficulties is often misunderstood leading to inappropriate treatment, bullying, social isolation and depression.

People with Autistic Spectrum Disorders find it very hard to understand the social rules that most people automatically follow and so can find it difficult to join in with conversation, make small talk, or know when to allow someone else to speak. This difficulty can also mean that they do not always pick up on subtle social cues, for example a change in the tone of someone's voice.

People with Autistic Spectrum Disorders may be described as 'socially odd' and make remarks which seem perfectly appropriate to them but can appear quite inappropriate to other people and be unaware of the effect that their words or actions have on other people. They may ask repetitive questions, seeming to take no notice of the answer. They may also have great difficulty in making eye contact or their eye contact can be unusual.

People with Autistic Spectrum Disorders can have great difficulty with understanding abstract concepts. They may use language very literally and so find it extremely hard if other people use language loosely or metaphorically. Their difficulty with generalising can mean that they find it hard to transfer from one situation to another and so may be described as 'rigid' or 'inflexible'. They are often very reliant on a fixed routine and find even very small changes to this extremely disconcerting. They may have obsessive or stereotypical behaviour such as extreme orderliness or tidiness or always wanting to sit in the same seat and become very upset when this cannot happen. They may be very preoccupied with and knowledgeable about a particular subject and spend hours studying everything about it or talk about it regardless of the interest of the listener. This can be a source of conflict and annoyance for those around them.

A further difficulty experienced by people with Autistic Spectrum Disorders concerns the way in which they receive information and respond to sensation. They may find certain sounds, touch or smells very disconcerting. They may also take a long time to make sense of information.

## **Some ways of working with people who have autistic spectrum disorders**

### **In general:**

- Understand that behaviour which may seem bizarre or rude to you is not a deliberate attempt to offend but stems from a person who sees the world in a different way
- Be careful to use clear and unambiguous language. Avoid language which could be misinterpreted such as metaphor. Remember that people with autistic spectrum disorders may find it hard to elicit meaning from the tone of your voice
- Remember that even good natured teasing can be misinterpreted as criticism
- Do not allow unusual behaviour to detract you from recognising ability. People on the autistic spectrum disorder can have extreme ability in certain areas of learning

### **During sessions:**

- Try to provide a calm environment with as few distractions as possible and a clear routine to sessions. Establish with the group ground rules such as agreed times for breaks. Be very clear in advance if there are going to be changes to this, for example if there is going to be a different tutor or a visitor
- Ensure consistency of approach and make sure that you explain at the beginning of a session what is going to happen during that session.
- Always use clear language. Some people may prefer written to oral instructions
- Provide a visual timetable with work organised from left to right and from top to bottom.
- Make sure the person understands what work they are meant to do, how long they are to do it for, when it has finished and what happens next
- Be sensitive to the fact that people with autistic spectrum disorders might find group work extremely challenging or may be disturbed by background noise or an excess of visual information
- Do not ignore people in sessions just because they do not always answer questions appropriately
- It can be useful to identify a person or place for a learner to go to if they are becoming upset. Having a few moments outside of the classroom can prevent a rage cycle from escalating

**When a learner is on work placement or in the work place:**

Think ahead about what information it might be appropriate to share, with the learner's consent, with a work experience provider.

Make sure that all employees are aware of how best to work with the learner and not just dismiss him as being 'odd' or let him get into situations where he is teased for being different.

**Example:**

Ben has just started an E2E programme. He does not seem to have too many problems with the general aspects of his course. However, staff have become increasingly worried by his behaviour and the fact that he has had several recent outbursts. One of these happened after you had changed the organisation of the room and Ben became very upset that things had been moved around.

Ben often spends his lunch breaks talking to the caretaker about the bus routes around the town - an obsession of his. Although the caretaker is generally very tolerant he has recently been asking Ben to go somewhere else for his lunch breaks and this too has made Ben upset.

Ben does not mix much with the other learners but usually he does not have overt difficulties with them. However, recently, as a result of the room reorganisation, he was unsure where to put his jacket. One of the other learners told him 'Oh, you put it where the coffee is' and Ben, taking this literally, went to the coffee room and started putting his jacket in the cupboard. At this the other learners laughed and one called him a 'weirdo' resulting in Ben getting very upset and angry. You know that soon Ben will need to go on work experience but you are worried about how to find an appropriate place for him.

- How might these situations have been averted?
- How might you help Ben now to feel more settled in the centre?
- Are there ways you might try to help him become part of the group?
- What might be the most appropriate work experience placement for Ben?
- What work would you need to do to prepare Ben and his employer for work experience?



## Supporting Learners – Guidelines on Specific Disabilities

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### People with speech difficulties

Speech difficulties can have a range of causes. Some people who have a neurological disability such as Cerebral Palsy or Multiple Sclerosis or people who have had a stroke can have difficulty with speaking clearly. People who have been born deaf or with partial hearing may have never been able to hear words in a way which has allowed them to learn to speak clearly. There are also people who have no other disability but who find speech difficult or who stammer.

Speech difficulties can result in individuals becoming very isolated because other people become impatient and do not give them the time to communicate properly. Speech difficulties can often cause considerable embarrassment to other individuals and to staff, hence they avoid asking questions and entering into dialogue. People also often assume that someone who has a speech difficulty is less intelligent than other people and can patronise them or leave them out of discussions. Consequently the potential of people with speech difficulties has often not been recognised.

People who are close to someone with a speech difficulty have often found ways of understanding their speech. Sometimes a person with a speech difficulty will use someone who knows them well to interpret their speech to others. Other people may choose at times to use hand written notes, specialist speech software or a communication board with words and pictures on it.

### Some ways of working with people who have a speech difficulty

#### In general:

- Establish whether individuals with speech difficulties have their own strategies of alternative communication, for example using hand written notes
- Take time. Speech which can appear very hard to understand when you first hear it can become much easier as you spend more time with the person and begin to understand their individual speech patterns
- Check your own responses. People often make an automatic assumption that people who have difficulty with speech are less intelligent. Focus on what a person is saying and not how they say it
- People listening to someone with a speech difficulty often feel embarrassed. Remember this embarrassment is your problem and not theirs and make sure it does not lead to you avoiding asking them questions and leaving them out of discussions
- Initially ask questions that require short answers, although avoid being patronising by only asking questions that require a yes or no answer
- Try to avoid guessing or completing peoples' sentences for them, unless they want you to do this to speed communication
- When it is difficult to understand a person's answers keep calm and look at their body language and expression as these might help your understanding

- If you have not understood what someone says then ask them to repeat it. Do not just nod and assume it was not important, but repeat back what you think they have said and confirm understanding

**During sessions:**

- Sometimes one other member of the group can understand a particular individual's speech patterns very well and the person with a speech difficulty might wish to use them when other people find it hard to understand what they are saying. If so make use of this
- Accept that learners may find group situations stressful but do not exclude them from groups unless they expressly want this. Allow time for their contributions and follow ground rules to ensure that other learners do not interrupt inappropriately
- Some people will find it much easier to speak in some situations than others, for example when they are feeling relaxed and are not being put under pressure. Stammerers sometimes find it much easier to speak on the telephone than in face-to-face dialogue. Learn from the people you work with what situations are preferable to them and use this information when planning their work placement
- Be aware that there might be times when technology can help, for example a learner using speech software on a laptop to read out his work to the rest of the class

**When a learner is on work placement or in the work place:**

- Discuss with the employer how best to deal with aspects of the work which may require the learner speaking to other people
- Ensure that staff in the workplace are aware of ways in which to respond to someone who has a speech difficulty and do not just isolate him from conversations

**Example:**

Justin is following a work based learning programme in Business Administration. He is currently placed in a small office. Staff say that his general work, especially when using the computer, is good. However, Justin has a quite marked speech difficulty and staff in the office are concerned that they often do not understand what he is saying.

As a result he is not able to perform certain office skills and they are also are realising that he is becoming increasingly isolated from the staff group.

- What are some of the things you could try to ensure that Justin is involved with the spoken as well as the other elements of the work?
- How might you try to facilitate his participation in the staff group?
- What practical steps might you take to try and support the other staff?



## Supporting Learners – Guidelines on Specific Disabilities

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### People with Medical conditions

Some people will have long term or permanent medical conditions which may have an impact on their ability to participate in work based learning. Many medical conditions may be "hidden" or unseen. Some medical conditions may cause fatigue and limited stamina. Unseen disabilities include epilepsy, diabetes, ME, hay fever, haemophilia, sickle cell, cystic fibrosis, HIV, AIDS, asthma, heart and other chronic conditions. Many conditions may be stable, others may be variable, and some will be progressive. The condition may or may not affect a person's ability to follow a training programme effectively. If you are unsure about a condition or its effect on their training, ask the person, who should be able to provide relevant details.

A person may have a medical condition that fluctuates in its severity. They may be stable and in good health for some of the time but stress, some incident or the condition itself, may cause the condition to flare up. The effects of many medical conditions can vary depending on age, circumstances and levels of stress. For many people general stamina is the area most affected.

This means that labour saving technology and planning an even workload, with the possibility of delayed deadlines, are important. People may need to have time off, and effective support packages will help them to catch up and cope on their return. Some people with degenerative or variable conditions will have changing needs and you may need to alter their support arrangements.

Below is some more information about three medical conditions that are both relatively common and often misunderstood.

**Epilepsy** is a neurological condition defined as a tendency to have recurrent seizures (the term "seizures" is preferable to fits). Seizures are a symptom of the condition not the cause. Most people can use drugs to control their condition effectively. In some cases, epilepsy is affected by stress.

Staff often have considerable fear about having people with epilepsy on their courses. However, the reality is that the majority of those with epilepsy are on medication which allows their seizures to be kept under control. Of course there is always a possibility that a seizure might occur. However, people with epilepsy usually have warning signs when they are about to have a seizure. There are very clear and simple procedures to follow when a person does have a seizure, which are listed below.

If a person who is likely to have a seizure is in a potentially harmful situation (for example in a workshop with dangerous machinery) you might need to carry out an individual risk assessment (see Section below on Risk Assessment).

Some people have brief seizures of five to fifteen seconds known as 'absences'. These may go unnoticed by people nearby, although they may get the impression that the person is daydreaming. It can mean that the person misses several (random) parts of a sentence or talk and could therefore find speech confusing because of inadvertently missing key points.

When a person experiences a major convulsive seizure, he or she will lose consciousness completely. Observers can help by placing a cushion under the head and making sure the person is comfortable after the seizure, preferably putting them in the recovery position until he or she regains consciousness. Never try to restrain the person, or put anything in his or her mouth. In a non-convulsive seizure, there is very little that an observer need do other than guide the person away from danger if he or she is 'wandering' and offer gentle reassurance after the seizure has finished. Many people with epilepsy will only experience seizures during the night and their daytime activity will be unaffected.

It is useful to draw up an agreement with a person who has epilepsy about what should happen after a seizure. A seizure may leave the person exhausted, disorientated and upset so this may not a good time to be discussing the support they need. A pre-prepared agreement can state what the person would like to happen after a seizure e.g. "I need a drink of water", "I need to go home in a taxi", "I need fresh air for a few moments", "I need you to 'phone my partner so that she can collect me from college".

Photosensitive epilepsy is a rare form of epilepsy in which seizures are triggered by flashing/flickering lights and certain patterns. A small number of people with photosensitive epilepsy are sensitive to VDU screens and it is possible to obtain screens which do not flicker. Larger VDU screens are usually not appropriate for this group.

**Diabetes** affects about 2% of the population. People with diabetes do not produce enough of the hormone insulin to control their blood sugar level. This can be treated with diet, exercise and/or injections, which allow the person to lead a regular active life. Some people may be prone to variations in mood and concentration. In some cases, if the condition is not stable, it can lead to other complications such as visual impairment.

On rare occasions someone with diabetes can suffer from either a low blood sugar level – often termed a “hypo” – (because they have not eaten enough to balance their insulin) or a high blood sugar level because they have forgotten to take their insulin. The person becomes drowsy and confused and if this happens they need to urgently adjust their blood sugar level either through eating or taking insulin as appropriate, because if left in this condition they can become unconsciousness. If they become unconscious, emergency help is needed.

It is strongly recommended that the appropriate courses of action are discussed with the learner in advance so that staff (and other learners if necessary) are aware of what to do.

**Asthma** is an increasingly common condition although it is not always severe enough to affect a person's study. Stress, air quality and even the cold can affect asthmatic conditions. Adequate ventilation is very important.

### **Some ways of working with people who have medical conditions**

- Make allowances for the effects of fatigue, caused by the medical condition or medication.

- Allow learners to leave the session if they need to have a rest or take medication.
- Be flexible about erratic attendance or punctuality where this may be due to a medical condition.
- Stress from new situations or pressure may adversely affect some, for example, those with asthma. Anything you can do to make sure people feel at ease and confident is helpful. This needs to be remembered when a learner is going on work placement.
- The physical environment will affect some conditions. For example, dust, smoke or dampness may set off an asthma attack. In some cases it may be appropriate to find alternative spaces to work in.
- Tests, examinations and assessments can cause additional stress and may put extra strain on those who are easily fatigued.
- Try not to become over anxious about a particular learner's condition. Remember that the majority of people have their conditions under control. Talk with them and see how you can manage it together
- There might be certain instances, for example if someone with epilepsy who does have fits during the day-time is working in an environment where there is dangerous machinery, that you may need to carry out an individual risk assessment (see section below).
- Always ask the person how you can best support them in their learning.

**When a learner is on work placement or in the workplace:**

- Discuss with the learner what information might need to be shared with the employer (for example if there is a health and safety risk which needs to be looked into or if certain environmental conditions can exacerbate a condition) and what does not need to be.
- People can have very extreme reactions about certain medical conditions, especially epilepsy. Make sure that employers realise that there are very simple ways of supporting people who have a seizure and that they should have a trained first aider who is familiar with what to do.

**Example:**

Fatima is on a motor vehicle skills course. She tells you she has epilepsy but her condition is controlled by medication. In the past three years she has only had four seizures during the day and they were linked to specific circumstances. She also says that she always gets clear warning signs before having a seizure. She is very keen to do this course and is happy to work with you to ensure that this can happen. She understands your anxiety but points out that, if she was never to do anything dangerous because there was a tiny chance that she might have a seizure, she would end up never going outside her door.

- What decisions might you come to with Fatima?
- Would you need to carry out a risk assessment, and if so what is it likely to entail?
- Would you wish to inform other members of staff?
- What would you do when preparing for Fatima's work placement?

## Supporting Learners – General Points

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### Health and Safety and Risk Assessment

Staff are often concerned about how their duties to disabled learners under the DDA link in with their duties under Health and Safety legislation. The DDA is clear that it does not override Health and Safety legislation and training organisations will have a duty of care to all learners. There may be very occasional cases when a disabled learner may have to be refused a place or not allowed to do certain parts of a programme because it is felt that this could pose a risk either to the learner or to others. However, there would need to be clear evidence that this was the case.

It is important that Health and Safety should not be used as an excuse for not including a disabled learner. Too often disabled people have been told that they cannot attend a particular organisation or take part in a particular activity because “they are a health and safety risk”. Often the reality is that the organisation has not developed its own health and safety procedures and risk assessment policies in ways which seek to try and include disabled people. Some questions which organisations will need to ask are:

- Have you done an audit as to how far your health and safety procedures cover disabled people?
- Do your fire procedures allow for disabled people, for example have you thought about how disabled learners might be evacuated in a case of a fire (e.g. by having a place of refuge which wheelchair users can use or by having flashing lights as well as sound alarms so that deaf people are aware of a fire)?
- Are there additional risks to disabled people in your organisation and have you put in place procedures to cover this? For example if you have workrooms with a lot of equipment do you ensure that this is stored in such a way that people with a physical disability or people who are blind or partially sighted are not at risk from tripping over it?

## Risk assessment

Health and Safety legislation demands that you draw up risk assessment procedures for aspects of your provision which might entail specific risks. You may need to draw up specific risk assessment procedures which cover disabled people and which enable you both to ascertain the likelihood of the risk and to put procedures in place to minimize it. It is important always to look at ways in which you can use risk assessments as a means of safely including disabled learners rather than as a means of automatically excluding them. Some examples of how you might do this are:

- You run a catering programme. Some of the tasks learners have to do involve them having to carry pans of very hot water. A learner has disclosed to you that she has epilepsy. The first thing you need to ascertain is the form that her seizures take. It might be that she only ever has seizures during the night in which case she is at no greater risk than other learners during your sessions. It might be that she does have occasional daytime seizures but always has clear warning signs a couple of minutes in advance. In this case you need to agree with her that you have a clear procedure in place for her to indicate to a member of staff when she has these signs (either by telling them or, if she is unable to speak at these times, by squeezing their hand). The staff member can then ensure that the learner is led into a place of safety. In the very rare instances when a person has seizures with no warning signs you might have to ensure that someone else actually carries the hot water for this learner.
- You have a learner at a hairdressing salon. The learner has a disability which means that she has some problems with co-ordination which can occasionally lead to her spilling things. You are worried about what could happen if she spilt any substances which could have a dangerous reaction on skin. You need to be very clear which substances could have this reaction and which do not. It might be that you need to put procedures in place which say that this learner does not herself mix dangerous substances, although she may be able to use them in a diluted form.
- You run a workshop which has certain pieces of dangerous machinery. These have clear warning notices on them but you are concerned about the safety of learners with a visual impairment. You might need to consider putting in place some simple barriers to ensure that all learners are protected.
- You are asked to take a learner with a learning difficulty who needs to be reminded to take a pill at lunchtime. The risk is that someone might forget to remind him. The procedures you will need to have in place might be:
  - A named person who is responsible for reminding him
  - Clear information on who is responsible if that person is not there
  - A checklist, clearly placed so everyone can see it, to tick after he has been reminded and taken it

Local Social Services organisations for disabled people have much experience in drawing up this kind of risk assessment procedure and you may wish to contact them to get advice.

## Physical Access

Training providers may wish to carry out an environmental audit of their premises. To do this you may well feel the need to call in other outside help. You can obtain details on organisations which could help you carry out an audit from the National Register of Access Consultants (see the Resources Leaflet for details). You will then need to prioritise areas which most urgently need adaptation in order to enable the best possible access for disabled learners.

It is important to remember that environment covers far more than just the installation of ramps and lifts. Some of the other areas to be included are:

- doors which are not too heavy to open or which swing back into peoples' faces
- induction loops for deaf people
- clear signs for people with a visual disability or a learning difficulty
- contrasting coloured paintwork and clear markings on stairs
- good lighting
- furniture which is appropriate for people with a physical disability, e.g. tables with adaptable heights etc.

Many of these changes can be built into your existing building works schedule, for example, ensuring you choose clearly contrasting colours when your building is due for redecoration.

It is important to remember that it is not just training rooms which need to be accessible. An audit should cover other areas such as canteens and specialist parking spaces reserved for disabled car users.

While many of the above changes can be put in place whether or not the provider currently has disabled learners, other adjustments will need to respond to individual needs, for example a particular learner who requires extra hand railings or specialist seating.

## Assessment

Learners who come to you straight from school and who have had a Statement of Special Educational Need while at school should have had an assessment carried out in their final year of school co-ordinated by the Connexions Service. It is important that you obtain a copy of this assessment.

Adult learners too may have had formal assessments which could help you understand the nature of the support they may require.

When assessing a learner's support needs it is essential to involve the learner fully in the process. Disabled people are the experts in managing their disability and need to inform you of the kind of support which will most help them. It is also important to record the adjustments you plan to put in place and then to regularly monitor the situation with the learner to see if they are proving beneficial.

There might be occasions when you and the learner feel that an assessment carried out by an external expert might be beneficial. The attached Resources Leaflet which includes both national and local organisations may help you in finding people to approach. If the assessment is being carried out to find out the best ways of supporting the learner in a practical work setting it is important that the assessment should be carried out in that setting - for example asking someone from an organisation for blind people to come into the workplace and make suggestions as to what adaptations might make it easier for the learner to carry out his work. When a formal assessment is carried out, for example a dyslexia assessment, it is essential that you discuss the results with the learner so that together you can work out the best way to implement its suggestions.

## External Support

Some learners may need additional support outside the particular sessions you run, for example a dyslexic learner might benefit from some sessions either in a small group or one to one with a member of staff who is trained in working with dyslexic people. Other learners might require in class support. Some examples of this could be:

- A learner with learning difficulties who requires a one to one worker
- A deaf learner who might require either an interpreter who will translate speech into BSL and vice versa, or a communicator who acts as an interpreter but also helps translate the content of, for instance, written passages, into language which can be understood by a BSL user
- A technician who can train a blind learner to use specialist voice activated software



## **Working with employers**

However good the support you give to learners is, it will only be fully effective if it is carried through to the times when they are working in the workplace. As we have seen work based learners can sometime be in an ambiguous situation as regards their legal entitlement. Their training provider has legal duties to provide them with reasonable adjustments under Part 3 of the DDA. Employers also have legal duties under DDA Part 2 towards their paid employees and under Part 3 towards people who are on vocational work placements. This will cover both those Apprenticeship learners who are working as paid employees, and also learners who are on work placement.

When setting up an initial contract with an employer it is important to tell them that, under DDA Part 3, both you and they have legal duties not to discriminate against disabled learners and that you only wish to select employers who will conform to this duty.

When working with employers it is important to point out that many of the changes you might want them to put in place will help to enhance the overall accessibility of their workplace. For example clear signs in large print or instructions which are visual as well as verbal, will not just benefit learners or employers with a visual impairment or a learning difficulty but will make things easier for everybody to understand.

With the learner's consent, talk to employers in advance about any particular difficulties a disabled learner may have. It is also important to involve employers and employees in understanding the reasons for a certain learner requiring certain adjustments or additional support. When people understand why certain tasks might be difficult for certain people they tend to be far more ready to accommodate to individual needs.

Let employers know that they can contact you if a specific difficulty arises when a learner is at work. Often a quick telephone call in good time can prevent a difficulty becoming a much larger problem.

## **Staff training**

It is essential that all your staff are aware of their legal duties not to discriminate against disabled learners and that they have received some kind of disability equality/disability etiquette training so that they are aware of how to respond to disabled people. This training is most effectively delivered by disabled trainers.

You might feel that you as an individual would like to undertake more in depth training in working with people who have a disability and/or learning difficulty. This might mean that you want to carry out a course over a period of time, or that you want to follow a short training programme focusing on a particular area of disability.

It might be that you do not feel you can at this point carry out a longer period of training. However, you might wish to receive some advice about a particular disability.

For instance you may have a learner with a particular disability in your programme and feel you could do with some professional advice. In such cases it might be very beneficial to contact local specialist organisations to see if you can set up one or two staff training sessions with them. These sessions might be attended by anyone in your organisations who works with the learner and also, if possible, by relevant employers and employees, (see attached Resource Leaflet for details of local organisations)

## A Local and National Resource Pack for Work Based Learning Providers

### Introduction

#### What this booklet is about, and how to use it

This booklet is written both for managers and staff of work-based learning organisations that might have learners with disabilities or learning difficulties.

This resource pack is not solely for institutions and employers that have specific provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. It is intended for everyone in the field of work-based learning.

This pack lists local and national organisations dealing with disability, their contact details, and describes what services they offer.

This booklet is intended to be a continuing resource rather than a one-off informative publication. We hope that managers and staff will use it as a reference work and feedback to us with any information that they feel would be a useful addition.

### Further information about the Disability Discrimination Act.

#### Codes of Practice

Codes of Practice for DDA Parts 2, 3 and 4 can be obtained from the Disability Rights Commission. While Parts 2 and 3 are the ones which are directly applicable to work based learning, the information and case studies contained in the Part 4 Code which covers post school education may well equate more closely to the work based learning situation.

The Disability Rights Commission (DRC) is an independent body, established to eliminate the discrimination faced by disabled people and promote equality of opportunity. As well as the Codes the DRC have produced a video called Talk about the inclusion of disabled people in post school education which provides a useful tool for staff development.

**Contact:** the DRC through the DRC Helpline, which you can access by voice, text, fax, post or email, between 08:00 and 20:00 hours, Monday to Friday.

Telephone 08457 622 633, Textphone 08457 622 644, Fax 08457 778 878,

Email [enquiry@drc-gb.org](mailto:enquiry@drc-gb.org) or visit: <http://www.drc-gb.org/whatwedo/helplineenquiry.asp>



## Useful Guidance documents

Certain documents which have been specifically written to support post school education providers implement their duties under DDA. Although written for education providers these publications do have significant relevance to staff in work based learning providers. They are:

- **Rights of Access** - a toolkit to help colleges meet or exceed the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act.  
Association of Colleges ([www.aoc.co.uk](http://www.aoc.co.uk))  
**Contact:** AoC, 5th Floor, Centre Point, 103 New Oxford Street, London, WC1A 1RG  
Tel: 0207 827 4600, fax: 0207 827 4650, email: [enquiries@aoc.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@aoc.co.uk)
- **Guidance for LEAs and adult education providers on the implementation of DDA Part 4.** (written for the DfES by NIACE)  
NIACE, the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education ([www.niace.org.uk](http://www.niace.org.uk))  
**Contact:** NIACE, 21 De Montfort Street, Leicester, LE1 7GE.  
Tel: 0116 204 4200, Fax: 0116 285 4514, Email: [enquiries@niace.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@niace.org.uk)
- **A Guide to the Disability Discrimination Act 1995** for Institutions of Further and Higher Education, Skill: National Bureau for Students with Disabilities.  
This looks at education providers duties under Parts 2, 3 and 4 of the DDA  
**Contact:** Skill: National Bureau for Students with Disabilities (<http://www.skill.org.uk>)  
Head Office:, Chapter House, 18-20 Crucifix Lane, London SE1 3JW  
Telephone/ Minicom: 020 7450 0620  
Fax: 020 7450 0650 Email: [skill@skill.org.uk](mailto:skill@skill.org.uk)
- **Providing Work Placements for Disabled Students** - A good practice guide for further and higher education institutions (Department of Education and Skills, 2002. Ref: DfES/0024/2002).  
This Guidance is particularly relevant to work based learning providers as it suggests procedures and practices which colleges and universities might follow to ensure that disabled students have equal access to work experience placements.  
**Contact:** DfES Publications P.O. Box 5050, Annesley, Nottingham, NG15 0DL  
Telephone: 0845 60 222 60; Fax: 0845 60 333 60; Minicom: 0845 60 555 60  
Email: [dfes@prolog.uk.com](mailto:dfes@prolog.uk.com)
- **Modern Apprenticeships and People with Disabilities.**  
This is a toolkit developed by the DfES which contains a number of case studies on disabled learners and advice on working with disabled apprentices. Can be downloaded from [http://www.lscdata.gov.uk/quality/qual\\_map/study84.pdf](http://www.lscdata.gov.uk/quality/qual_map/study84.pdf)



## Resources provided by the Learning and Skills Council

The National Learning and Skills Council has produced a range of resources designed to support colleges and adult and community education providers fulfil their duties under DDA Part 4. All of these have relevance for work based learning providers. They include:

- A series of nine single sheet leaflets differentiated for different types of staff (e.g. teaching staff, canteen and catering staff, front line reception staff, senior managers etc.). Each leaflet gives a brief description of duties under the DDA and a checklist relevant to these specific staff members
- Simple staff development materials to accompany these leaflets
- A Resources Review
- Guidance on Disclosure and Confidentiality

These are all available on the LSC website ([www.lsc.gov.uk/documents](http://www.lsc.gov.uk/documents))

In addition to this the LSC has produced a DVD which includes a staff training video of a mock trial under DDA Part 4 with accompanying facilitators' notes. Available from Skill: National Bureau for Students with Disabilities, tel. 02074500620)

## Forthcoming Resources from LSC/LSDA

The Learning and Skills Council and the Learning and Skills Development Agency have set up eighteen action research projects to be carried out from August 2003. These have looked at a variety of ways in which both education and work based learning organisations can widen opportunities for disabled learners. Further details of these projects are available from Local LSCs.

## Basic Skills materials

### Skills for Life - literacy, numeracy and spoken language

In recent years the Government has placed a high priority on the teaching of basic skills to adults. The DfES has funded a Basic Skills and Inclusive Learning programme (BASIL) followed by a staff training programme (managed jointly by LSDA and NIACE with a consortium of key national agencies including The Basic Skills Agency and Skill).

Two key documents produced as a result of this initiative are:

**Adult pre entry curriculum framework for literacy and numeracy**

and

**Access for All - guidance on making the adult literacy and numeracy core curriculum accessible**

Both of these documents have invaluable information for staff wishing to ensure the accessibility of the basic skills curriculum to the full range of learners. Although they both deal specifically with the basic skills curriculum, the information in them is relevant to staff working with learners with disabilities and learning difficulties across a much wider curriculum framework. Both are available from the Basic Skills Agency:

[www.basic-skills.co.uk](http://www.basic-skills.co.uk) Basic Skills Agency Publications - Orderline, Admail 524, London, WC1A 1BR Tel: **0870 600 2400**. Email: [basicskills@twoten.Dress.net](mailto:basicskills@twoten.Dress.net)



## Key National Organisations

There are a large number of national disability organisations. The list below covers just a selection of these:

### Royal National Institute for the Deaf (RNID) ([www.rnid.org.uk](http://www.rnid.org.uk))

The RNID runs a telephone/textphone helpline and also produces information leaflets and fact sheets. Its most recent publication on post school education is **Deaf Students in Further Education**. This is a very comprehensible and clear account of what deaf learners might need when studying at college. Although written specifically for college staff the issues raised in this book are equally relevant for those working in adult and community education and work based learning.

**Contact:** 19-23 Featherstone Street, London EC1Y 8SL ,  
Tel: **0808 808 0123** (Freephone), Textphone: **0808 808 9000** (Freephone),  
Fax: **020 7296 8199**  
Email: [information@rnid.org.uk](mailto:information@rnid.org.uk)

### Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB) ([www.rnib.org.uk](http://www.rnib.org.uk))

The RNIB produces a huge range of resource materials. It runs a telephone information service and supports this by a range of fact sheets. Local branches can also loan equipment.

**Contact:** RNIB Customer Services, PO Box 173, Peterborough PE2 6WS,  
Tel. 0845 702 3153, Fax. 01733 371555,  
Email Customer services: [CServices@rnib.org.uk](mailto:CServices@rnib.org.uk)  
Alternatively contact:  
RNIB Corporate Publishing, 105 Judd Street, London, WC1H 9NE  
Tel: 020 7388 1266  
Email: [cippub@rnib.org.uk](mailto:cippub@rnib.org.uk)

### Scope (<http://www.scope.org.uk>)

Scope is the national organisation for people with cerebral palsy. However, the information it produces may well be relevant to other people with a physical disability.

The Scope website offers a large quantity of useful information on-line but it also provides a large index of additional publications that colleagues working primarily with disable students will find very useful. The site is large and it may be helpful to go directly to the publications catalogue with the web address:

<http://www.scope.org.uk/publications/index.shtml>

**Contact:** Scope, 6 Market Road, London N7 9PW  
Tel Helpline: **0808 800 3333**

## RADAR (Royal Association for Disability and Rehabilitation)

([www.radar.org.uk/](http://www.radar.org.uk/))

RADAR provides information and advice on all aspects of disability and has also compiled a list of recommended Disability Awareness or Equality trainers

**Contact:** 12 City Forum, 250 City Road, London EC1V 8AF

Tel: **0171 250 3222**, Fax: **0207 2500212**, Email: [radar@radar.org.uk](mailto:radar@radar.org.uk)

## Mencap ([www.mencap.org.uk](http://www.mencap.org.uk))

Mencap is one of the major organisations for people with learning difficulties. Mencap has produced several documents looking at the learning needs of people with learning difficulties attending further or adult education. The most recent of these is the recent Essential Skill Curriculum produced for learners with learning difficulties.

**Contact:** 123 Golden Lane, London EC1Y 0RT, Telephone: **020 7454 0454**,

Fax: **020 7696 5540**, Email: [information@mencap.org.uk](mailto:information@mencap.org.uk).

## British Dyslexia Association ([www.bda-dyslexia.org.uk](http://www.bda-dyslexia.org.uk))

The BDA is a membership organisation for dyslexic people. It offers advice, information and help to families, professionals and dyslexic individuals. It works to raise awareness and understanding of dyslexia, and to effect change. BDA provides a range of useful resources related to dyslexia.

**Contact:** The British Dyslexia Association, 98 London Road, Reading, RG1 5AU.

Admin Tel: **0118 966 2677** Fax: **0118 935 1927**

E-mail: [admin@bda-dyslexia.demon.co.uk](mailto:admin@bda-dyslexia.demon.co.uk)

Helpline: **0118 966 8271** Monday to Friday, 10.00am-12.45pm and 2.00-4.45pm,

E-mail: [info@dyslexiahelp-bda.demon.co.uk](mailto:info@dyslexiahelp-bda.demon.co.uk).

## Adult Dyslexia Organisation

([www.futurenet.co.uk/charity/ado/adomenu/adomenu.htm](http://www.futurenet.co.uk/charity/ado/adomenu/adomenu.htm))

The ADO is an organisation of dyslexic adults. It provides support for dyslexic adults and resources for those working with dyslexic adults.

**Contact:** Admin: 0207-737-7646, Helpline: 0207-924-9559, Fax: 0207-207-7796,

Email: [dyslexia.hq@dial.pipex.com](mailto:dyslexia.hq@dial.pipex.com)

**The Dyslexia Institute (<http://www.dyslexia-inst.org.uk/>)**

The Dyslexia Institute (DI) is a charity that specialises in the assessment and teaching of people with dyslexia and is now the only national dyslexia teaching organisation in the world. It seeks ways to improve the effectiveness of teaching and also focuses on the development of teaching materials.

**Contact:** EGHAM DYSLEXIA INSTITUTE

Park House, Wick Road, Egham, Surrey TW20 0HH

Tel: 01784 222325 Fax: 01784 222387 E-Mail: [egham@dyslexia-inst.org.uk](mailto:egham@dyslexia-inst.org.uk)

**The London Language and Literacy Unit (LLLU)**

<http://www.lsbu.ac.uk/lluplus/dyslexia/index.shtml>

LLLU aims to help organisations improve the quality of education and training by pioneering and disseminating innovative approaches and good practice, so that individuals with a wide range of language and learning needs can achieve success. It has produced several useful publications.

**Contact:** LLU+, London South Bank University,

103 Borough Road, London SE1 0AA

Tel: +44 (0)20 7815 6290 | Fax: +44 (0)20 7815 6296 | email: [lluplus@lsbu.ac.uk](mailto:lluplus@lsbu.ac.uk)

## The Mental Health Foundation ([www.mentalhealth.org.uk](http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk))

The **Mental Health Foundation** produces many publications on mental health. It also produces a newsletter, monthly updates and factsheets. It has recently expanded to include the **Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities** which has its own website (<http://www.learningdisabilities.org.uk/>) and runs several web based forums:

- [The Choice Forum](#). This is the biggest, liveliest online discussion forum on issues in the lives of people with learning disabilities in the UK. It brings together people working with people with learning disabilities, national and local policy makers, service providers and purchasers, parents, carers and people with learning disabilities. It is a forum where you can ask questions, find answers, and share ideas with others with similar interests.
- [The CAIT Advocacy Forum](#). This forum is brought to you by Citizen Advocacy Information and Training. It is a forum which discusses all issues regarding independent advocacy.
- [The PMLD Network](#). This forum is brought to you by The PMLD Network. This forum discusses the support of people with profound and multiple learning disabilities.
- [The Hidden Loves Forum](#). This forum discusses the support of people with learning difficulties in same sex relationships.

While primarily addressing the needs of staff in health and social services any of these forums might well be useful sources of advice for people working in post school education or work based learning.

**Contact:** Mental Health Foundation,

9th Floor, Sea Containers House 20 Upper Ground London SE1 9QB

Tel: + 44 (0) 20 7803 1100. Fax: + 44 (0) 20 7803 1111.

The Mental Health Foundation Email: [mhf@mhf.org.uk](mailto:mhf@mhf.org.uk)

The Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities Email: [fpld@fpld.org.uk](mailto:fpld@fpld.org.uk)

(MIND) The Mental Health Charity (<http://www.mind.org.uk>)

Mind is a mental health charity in England and Wales. Their aim is to advance the views, needs and ambitions of people with experience of mental distress, promote inclusion by challenging discrimination, influence policy through campaigning and education, inspire the development of quality services, which reflect expressed need and diversity and to achieve equal civil and legal rights through campaigning and education. Factsheets can be downloaded from their website on issues such as mental health problems and learning disabilities, by visiting the search page.

**Contact:** Mind, 15-19 Broadway, London E15 4BQ,

Tel: **020 8519 2122**, Fax: **020 8522 1725**,

Email: [contact@mind.org.uk](mailto:contact@mind.org.uk), Information helpline: [Mindinfo@mind.org.uk](mailto:Mindinfo@mind.org.uk)

National Autistic Society ([www.nas.org.uk](http://www.nas.org.uk))

The National Autistic Society supports families of autistic children and adults but also helps other professionals working with autistic people. The complexity and variety of the condition is not widely understood and their website provides an enormous amount of information ranging from introductory information to links to research sites.

**Contact:** 393 City Road, London EC1V 1NG.

Tel: **020 7833 2299** Fax: **020 7833 9666**

Email: [nas@nas.org.uk](mailto:nas@nas.org.uk)

Skill, the National Bureau for Students with Disabilities

([www.skill.org.uk](http://www.skill.org.uk))

Skill is the only organisation which works specifically to further the interests of disabled learners in post school education. It covers the areas of policy development, research and information. Skill runs an Information Service, produces regularly updated Information Leaflets, and also produces a regular Journal and Newsletter. Relevant publications include:

**Students with Mental Health Difficulties: your questions answered.** This gives an overview of the specific issues related to working with learners with mental health difficulties in a further education context.

**Aasha: Working with young people with a learning difficulty from a South Asian background**

Skill: National Bureau for Students with Disabilities

Head Office: Chapter House, 18-20 Crucifix Lane, London SE1 3JW

Telephone/ Minicom: 020 7450 0620

Fax: 020 7450 0650 Email: [skill@skill.org.uk](mailto:skill@skill.org.uk)

Information Service

(open Tuesdays 11.30am to 1.30pm and Thursdays 1.30-3.30pm)

Tel: 0800 328 5050 (Freephone) and 020 7657 2337.

Ring us on the second phone number saves us money - thanks!

Minicom: 0800 068 2422 Email: [info@skill.org.uk](mailto:info@skill.org.uk)

## NIACE, the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education

([www.niace.org.uk](http://www.niace.org.uk))

NIACE is the leading national organisation for adult education. Its work includes policy development, research and the creation of resources. It produces a monthly journal **Adults Learning**. NIACE has a regular team of staff working on issues related to disability and learning difficulty. Relevant publications include:

**Images of Possibility: creating learning opportunities for adults with mental health difficulties**, Alison Wertheimer, 1997. This book looks at key features and innovative practice in LEA and college provision.

**Making the Jump**, Yola Jacobsen, 2002, examines provision in further and adult education which supports people with learning difficulties to make the transition from education to employment. It also includes a **Learner Pack** which enables people with learning difficulties to assess their own needs in making the jump from college to work.

**Contact:** NIACE, Renaissance House, 20 Princess Road West, Leicester LE1 6TP

Email: [enquiries@niace.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@niace.org.uk)

Tel: +44 (0)116 204 4200 and +44 (0)116 204 4201

Fax: +44 (0)116 285 4514

## Learning and Skills Development Agency (LSDA)

([www.lsda.org.uk/home.asp](http://www.lsda.org.uk/home.asp))

The Learning and Skills Development Agency is a strategic national resource for the development of policy and practice in post-16 education and training. The Agency was previously known as the Further Education Development Agency (FEDA). It produces a wealth of publications, many of which can be downloaded from the LSDA website.

**Contact:** Learning & Skills Development Agency

Regent Arcade House, 19-25 Argyll Street, London W1F 7LS

Switchboard: 020 7297 9000 Fax: 020 7297 9001

Information Services team.

Tel: 020 7297 9144 Fax: 020 7297 9242

Email: [enquiries@LSDA.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@LSDA.org.uk)

## Disability Equality in Education ([www.diseed.org.uk](http://www.diseed.org.uk))

DEE is a small charity based on the pioneering work of Richard Rieser and Micheline Mason. It provides training and resources primarily for schools, but also for colleges and local education authorities around the issue of inclusion for all students within our education system.

**Contact:** Disability Equality in Education

Unit GL, Leroy House, 436 Essex Road, London, N1 3QP

Tel: 0207 359 2855, Fax: 020 7354 3372

Email: [info@diseed.org.uk](mailto:info@diseed.org.uk)

## **The Council for the Advancement of Communication with Deaf People (CACDP) (<http://www.cacdp.org.uk/>)**

A registered charity that is raising standards of communication between deaf and hearing people. They do this as a UK awarding body recognised by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) offering a wide range of nationally accredited qualifications. CACDP is also the registration body for professional British Sign Language/English interpreters (for England, Wales & N Ireland), and UK wide for Lipspeakers, Deafblind Interpreters (Manual) and Speech to Text Reporters. For service providers who wish to obtain interpreting or other communication support for deaf people to access their services, CACDP produces a directory of registered Interpreters and other Language Service Professionals.

**Contact:** CACDP Head Office, Durham University Science Park

Block 4, Stockton Road, Durham DH1 3UZ

Tel: 0191 383 1155 Fax: 0191 383 7914 Textphone: 0191 383 7915

Email: [durham@cacdp.org.uk](mailto:durham@cacdp.org.uk)





## Physical Access, Technical Support and Risk Assessment

### Physical Access

Work based learning providers might wish to commission an access audit of their premises. Key organisations who may give advice on this are:

**National Register of Access Consultants** ([www.nrac.org.uk](http://www.nrac.org.uk))

There is now a national register of approved access consultants offering a database of appropriately qualified and experienced access consultants and auditors who have demonstrated their expertise in access matters to the satisfaction of the Register's Admissions Panel. This is a government sponsored scheme administered by the Centre for Accessible Environments.

**Contact:** the Register Manager: Brenda Puech,

70 South Lambeth Road, London SW8 1RL

Tel: 020 7735 7845, textphone: 020 7840 0125, fax 020 7840 5811

Email: [brendapuech@nrac.org.uk](mailto:brendapuech@nrac.org.uk)

**The Centre for Accessible Environments** ([www.cae.org.uk](http://www.cae.org.uk))

The CAE is a key organisations dealing with the accessibility of the built environment. It is a charity which provides information on all aspects of physical access to the built environment. As well as its information services it produces publications and provides training and consultancy services.

**Contact:** Centre for Accessible Environments,

70 South Lambeth Road, London SW8 1RL

Tel/textphone:(+44) 020 7840 0125 Fax:(+44) 020 7840 5811

email: [info@cae.org.uk](mailto:info@cae.org.uk)



## Technical Support

Access for disabled learners is increasingly being enhanced by the development of assistive technology and technical support. Some organisations which can support staff in finding out about different types of assistive technology and technical support available are:

**Abilitynet** ([www.abilitynet.org.uk](http://www.abilitynet.org.uk))

Abilitynet is a charity that brings the benefits of computer technology to adults and children with a disability. It gives free information and advice on any aspect of the use of a computer by someone with a disability.

**Contact:** Freephone Helpline: 0800 269 545; Tel: 01926 312847 Fax: 01926 407425

Email: [Enquiries@AbilityNet.co.uk](mailto:Enquiries@AbilityNet.co.uk)

**Disabled People's Electronic Village Hall** (<http://www.electroville.org.uk/>)

This is a generic disability website that offers information on the use of technology for disabled people in very simple and straightforward terms that non-specialists can understand. Although it is a local project based development the information provided covers the UK.

**Contact:** Disabled People's Electronic Village Hall

The Walsh Building, Town Hall Way, Dewsbury, West Yorkshire, WF12 8EE

Tel: (01924) 453502 Fax: (01924) 461084

E-mail: [enquiries@electroville.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@electroville.org.uk)

**TechDis** ([www.techdis.ac.uk](http://www.techdis.ac.uk))

TechDis is a Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) funded service supporting the further and higher education communities in all aspects of technology and disability and/or learning difficulty support. It can give advice on new and emerging technology in the field of learning and teaching.

Techdis has recently published an excellent pack containing a series of leaflets on ILT and disabled learners: **Inclusive Learning and teaching: ILT and Disabled Learners.**

Electronic version available on <http://ferl.becta.org.uk/publications/techdisferl>

**Contact:** Email: [helpdesk@techdis.ac.uk](mailto:helpdesk@techdis.ac.uk)

Telephone: 01904 717580

TechDis, The Higher Education Academy,

Innovation Way, York Science Park, York, YO10 5BR



## Risk Assessment

Providers are often concerned about how to reconcile their duties under the DDA with duties under health and Safety legislation. It is apparent that it will become increasingly important to draw up clear risk assessment procedures on how best to safely include disabled people.

Some publications which can assist this include:

### **Five steps to risk assessment**

HSE (Jan2003) The Health and Safety Executive.

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg163.pdf>

### **A quick guide to risk assessment requirements**

HSE (Jan2003) The Health and Safety Executive.

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg218.pdf>

### **'Empowerment and Protection'**

Andy Alaszewski, Foundation for People with learning disabilities.

This report looks at the development of policies and practices in risk assessment and risk management in services supporting people with learning disabilities, (available from the Foundation for People with learning Disabilities, Email: [fpld@fpld.org.uk](mailto:fpld@fpld.org.uk) Tel: + 44 (0) 20 7803 1100. Fax: + 44 (0) 20 7803 1111.



## Access To Work

### What is Access to Work?

If you are thinking about recruiting a disabled person, you will know they have the skills and potential to do the work, but there may still be practical problems to overcome.

Access to Work (AtW) is available to help overcome the problems resulting from disability. It offers practical advice and help in a flexible way that can be tailored to suit the needs of an individual in a particular job. AtW does not replace the normal responsibilities of the employer to implement Health and Safety regulations or replace the responsibilities required by the Disability Discrimination Act.

### How does it do this?

As well as giving advice and information to disabled people and employers, Jobcentre Plus pays a grant, through AtW, towards any extra employment costs that result from a person's disability.

### How does the programme work?

AtW can offer a grant towards the approved costs that arise because of an individual's disability.

For people who are starting a job with you, the grant is up to 100% of the approved costs. For those who already work for you, the grant is up to 80% of the approved costs over the first £300.

If you have a disabled employee or if you want to recruit someone with a disability, contact your local Disability Employment Adviser (DEA) through your nearest Jobcentre Plus Office or Jobcentre. The DEA will put you in touch with an Access to Work Adviser who will discuss your particular circumstances with you.

### What type of help can be provided through Access to Work?

AtW can help in a number of ways. For example, it can help pay for:

- communicator support at interview (CSI) which meets the full cost of hiring an interpreter to remove barriers to communication at interview;
- a support worker, which allows the applicant to use the services of a helper. Types of support might include reading to a visually impaired person, communicating for a hearing impaired person via sign language (other than at interview which is covered by CSI), providing specialist coaching for a person with learning difficulties or helping a person with care needs;
- special aids equipment to help a disabled person function in the work place;
- adaptation to premises or to existing equipment;
- help with the additional costs of travel to, or in, work for people who are unable to use public transport.

### How are the disabled person's particular needs assessed?

The AtW Adviser will normally speak to you and your employee to arrive at the most effective solution. In the majority of cases, this can be done over the telephone; however, a visit can be arranged if necessary. Sometimes specialist or technical advice may be needed, which the AtW Adviser will help arrange.

### How long will it take to put the assistance in place?

We aim to get you the help that you need in the shortest possible time. However, if it is likely to take some time, the AtW Adviser will explore temporary alternatives with you, for example a support worker or reader, while the permanent solution is sorted out.

## Who will purchase the help needed?

It is usually you, the employer, who arranges to purchase the agreed support and then you claim back the grant from AtW.

## How much is the Access to Work grant?

Access to Work makes grants towards costs. If you take on an unemployed person or have recruited someone less than six weeks ago, the grant is up to 100% of the approved costs. Costs are approved by the AtW Adviser.

Whatever the employment status of the applicant, **AtW pays up to 100% of the approved costs** of help with

- support workers and fares to work; and
- communicator support at interview.

AtW also pays additional travel costs incurred due to a disability.

For people working for an employer, and who have been in the job for six weeks or more and need special equipment or adaptations to premises, **AtW pays a proportion of the costs of support**, as follows:

Approved Cost	Maximum Access to Work contribution
Less than £300	Nil
Between £300 and £10,000	80% of the cost over £300
Over £10,000	80% of the cost between £300 and £10,000 and 100% of the cost over £10,000

All help is for a maximum period of three years after which the AtW Business Centre will review the support and the circumstances. Access to Work may provide help for a further period if your employee continues to be eligible for help under the rules that then apply. Remember, Access to Work is available when additional costs are incurred because of a disability. It cannot be used to provide support usually provided by employers or required under legislation for all their employees.

Access to Work solutions are individually tailored to meet the disability needs of the disabled employee in the workplace. The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 puts a duty on employers to take any steps that are reasonable to reduce or remove any substantial disadvantage that a physical feature of their premises or their employment arrangements causes a disabled employee or job applicant compared with a non-disabled person. This is known as 'reasonable adjustment'. Jobcentre Plus cannot give legal advice on this matter.

**The fact that Jobcentre Plus is providing help for a disabled employee through Access to Work does not mean that you have satisfied the duty under the DDA.**

## Jobcentre Plus South East

### Access to Work Business Centre

Jobcentre Plus Business Centre Norfolk House High Street Shoreham by Sea	Tel: 01273 364750 Textphone: 01273 364753	Jane Cobby
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West Sussex BN43 5EN		
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<http://www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk/cms.asp?Page=/Home/Customers/HelpForDisabledPeople/AccessToWork>



## **Local Disability Organisations**



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# Including Disabled Learners in Work Based Learning

An Equality and Diversity / DDA Resource Handbook and Good Practice Guide for Work Based Learning Providers

April 2005

Of interest to Learning and Skills Councils and everyone involved in Work Based Learning in the South East.

Produced by  
LSC Sussex and  
LSC Hampshire and  
IOW

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